



## Message from the Director

Since our last report, we moved forward in some important ways. One of the cross-Center accomplishments I'm excited about is our work with our partners. From NCBDDD's beginning, partners have been our foundation and compatriots. We've been lucky to have the key ingredient that makes successful partnerships: a gathering of people and organizations who want to achieve the same goals, on a day to day basis. We can each trust that our dedication to the work is complementary and that results, in the near and far term, will be successful. I have had the chance over the last two years to meet more with partners, to hear new perspectives, and to think through ways to reach the important public health goals that lay before us. These opportunities helped me to have a better barometer on relevant issues, and to move our focus areas forward with conviction.



We have started looking at new ways that we can work together. We are all dedicated in our work to helping people live life to the fullest. This hope guides us each day to protect people who are especially vulnerable to health risks - babies, children, people with blood disorders, and people with disabilities.

These connections and discussions with partners have helped us make progress in our work in critical focus areas. Here are a few snapshots of our partnership activities over the past year:

### Autism Spectrum Disorders

- Engaged new and existing partners and worked with media to promote public health messages around the new ADDM data, making clear the importance of all families having access to the services they need for their children. We then developed a community report so that communities can use these new data to plan for services and understand where improvements can be made to help children.
- Worked with partners to print and distribute customized English and Spanish 'Learn the Signs' materials, which were made available to families in Head Start and Early Head Start programs statewide. We then worked with partners to build the base of knowledge for providers, integrating the Autism Case Training Curriculum into residency training at

**Message from the Director**  
**Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2012**

children's hospitals, medical schools, and Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) programs.

**Major Birth Defects Associated with Maternal Risk Factors**

- Convened the Fetal Alcohol Prevention Team meeting that reflected an innovative partnership engagement strategy. Leaders from large businesses (3M, Kimberly-Clark, Home Depot and General Mills), insurers (Aetna, Blue Cross Blue Shield/ WellPoint, and Health Partners) and policy makers (MADD, National Business Group on Health), and other federal partners were brought together to help CDC understand what “makes the case” for these powerful groups to demand alcohol Screening and Brief Intervention for their constituents.
- Began working with partners on the Treating for Two initiative to increase our understanding of which medications are safe and which should be avoided during pregnancy. This initiative will prevent birth defects and help mothers become healthier by identifying the best ways to manage common conditions during pregnancy and childbearing years.

**Preventing Death and Disability Associated with Venous Thromboembolism (VTE)**

- Convened a Hospital-Associated Venous Thromboembolism Surveillance Stakeholder Meeting to understand what can be done to prevent hospital-associated VTE surveillance.

**Preventing and Controlling Complications from Blood Disorders, such as Sickle Cell Disease (SCD)**

- Partnered with the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America and the National Baptist Congress of Christian Education to develop and disseminate a new video entitled, “Sickle Cell Disease Education and Awareness in Your Community.” The primary audience for the video was faith-based organizations who could show the video to their congregations on Sickle Cell Sabbath, held on a Sunday in September.

**Disability-related Health Disparities**

- Provided information to people with disabilities, caregivers, partners and first responders on how to prepare for disasters and how to evacuate safely and quickly.

**Message from the Director**  
**Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2012**

- Developed with our partners a new web-based tool, [www.childmuscleweakness.org](http://www.childmuscleweakness.org). This tool helps primary care clinicians, physical and occupational therapists, and other specialists identify and evaluate child muscle weakness, including muscular dystrophy. Key components of the tool have been endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

This list is just a sample of the kinds of headway we've made because of partners and their support. **Charles Schwab, the American businessman and investor who founded that company said,** *"Appreciation can make a day, even change a life. Your willingness to put it into words is all that is necessary."*

So I am taking his suggestion to heart and want to put into words my appreciation of what our partners have done for NCBDDD and how much I value and believe in your efforts and in all that we can accomplish together. I want to express my deep appreciation for the friendships, connectivity, and support from our partners that we have had from our inception.

Sincerely,



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